

Chatterbox #94 – Party time

Transcript

Maura: Happy Holidays!

Harp: Happy New Year!

Maura: This is Maura.

Harp: And Harp.

Maura: And we're here with a special Culips episode for you.

Harp: Yes. Remember to check out our website, Culips.com. That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Maura: Because at our website, you can become a member. And when you become a member, you have access to the transcripts for our episodes, more detailed explanations of the expressions we use, and quizzes to help test yourself.

Harp: Yes. And also, if you're on Facebook, come on over and say hello. And if you have a question about English, you can ask it there and either Maura or I, or our lovely editor Jessie will answer for you.

Maura: That's right. So, come on over and check us out on Facebook too.

Harp: Now today we're bringing you a special Chatterbox episode.

Maura: Yes. And if you've been a Culips listener for a while, you know that in our Chatterbox episodes, Harp and I chat about all different kinds of topics. And at this time of year, we wanted to choose a topic that was timely.

Harp: Yes. So today we're gonna talk about parties.

Maura: Yay! I love parties.

Harp: Me too. And I love how many parties there are during the Christmas season.

Maura: That's right. There are so many parties. There are **Christmas parties**, parties for New Year's as well, and really all kinds of other **holiday parties**.

Harp: Yes. So today we're gonna break it down by first talking about different types of parties.

Maura: And then we're going to talk about planning parties. And to be honest, it's mostly Harp who'll be talking and I'll be asking the questions.

- Harp: Yep. And then we're gonna talk about expressions with the word *party* in them.
- Maura: Yes. You heard right. This episode is all about partying.
- Harp: Let's get started.
- Maura: All right. So first we're going to talk about different kinds of parties.
- Harp: Yes. So obviously, this is the holiday season, so you have **a holiday party**.
- Maura: That's right. There are lots of parties at this time. There are parties with family and there are parties with friends.
- Harp: And I would say almost every company has some sort of a work **holiday party**.
- Maura: Yeah. I know my family always gets together around Christmas and most of my family gets together for other holidays too, like Thanksgiving and Easter.
- Harp: Yeah. Same thing for my family. We have a lot of parties during the holidays.
- Maura: Oh, really. Usually, my mom and my dad's families, they just have one big party with everyone who's invited.
- Harp: Yeah. I see a lot of people doing that.
- Maura: Yeah. It makes sense because everyone is together. Everyone gets to see each other at the same time.
- Harp: The holiday season, it's a nice time. It's a nice excuse to see each other when you're so busy the rest of the year with your own lives and work and all of that.
- Maura: A lot of the time, I actually don't see much of my **extended family** except for the holidays.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Maura: But I've never personally put on **a holiday party** for my family. I think that would be more work than I could handle.
- Harp: Yeah. I've done the family dinner for Christmas at my house and it's been me who's hosted it, but in terms of hosting a really big **holiday party**, no, because that was maybe 12 people, max.
- Maura: I know sometimes when my mom's had **a holiday party**, she asks everyone to bring something and then it's a little bit less work.

- Harp: Yeah. **A potluck**, it's much less work. It's hard to think about having to cook for, let's say, even 20 people. That's a lot of work.
- Maura: Mmhhh. So around the holidays, families, and then sometimes friends, have big parties. Another kind of party is a work party.
- Harp: Yes, a work party. And at my company we try to do a work party, or a work event, once every quarter. So every three months we're organizing some sort of party.
- Maura: That sounds, like, pretty often.
- Harp: Yeah, it is. It's a nice way to bring all of the team together because sometimes people are working on very isolated projects and they don't have time to talk to everyone else, so it's fun.
- Maura: Yeah, for sure. I like work parties. They're fun, but I've never had very many of them. This is actually the time when even if you work at a place that almost never has parties, you probably have **a Christmas party**. Places that have only one party a year, this is the time when they have it.
- Harp: Yup. Like I said before, I think almost every single company has **a holiday party**. And I am planning my company party. It's gonna be fun, I think.
- Maura: Like you said, it's fun when everyone gets together outside of work to do something a little bit social.
- Harp: Yes. I definitely think that's true. It's fun. You get to relax and maybe talk about things outside of work.
- Maura: You know, I also remember when I was a kid going to my father's work parties but I don't remember the Christmas ones as much as I remember the summer parties, because we often went to a water park and we got to go swimming and play games. It was really fun.
- Harp: That's fun. I actually am the opposite, I remember my dad's Christmas work parties more than any summer parties. And they always had a Santa Claus that would come and all of the kids would get presents and, yeah, it was super fun.
- Maura: Yeah. It is a nice time to get together with people you wouldn't normally get together with.
- Harp: Yep. But I think now, more and more, the trend is in companies that not the whole family is invited. It's just the person who works in the company.

- Maura: Yeah, just the person. And sometimes that's nice to because you all know each other so you don't have to introduce your husband or wife and the kids, you just meet and talk with your colleagues.
- Harp: Yes.
- Maura: And sometimes at work parties, and even family parties, around Christmas, they have a **Secret Santa**.
- Harp: So yeah, **Secret Santa**, that's fun. It's basically a gift exchange among a group of colleagues, or even the whole company, and you pick names and you have to buy that person a present.
- Maura: Yeah. So it's a secret because you don't know who's gonna buy you a present and you don't tell anybody who you're buying a present for, so it's kind of a fun little surprise.
- Harp: Yep. Usually there's a limit of how much money you should spend and sometimes people give ideas of what they want for Christmas or what they want as a present.
- Maura: Yeah. Those are fun. So, we talked about parties around holidays and then we have work parties. You might also have the more sophisticated dinner party.
- Harp: Yes. Dinner parties. I feel I'm going to more and more dinner parties lately.
- Maura: Well, you know, Harp, what I was going to say is that the older you get, the more dinner parties you go to. You know, when you're a teenager, you go to parties and no one really eats food other than, like, chips or pizza. And then you get a little bit older and people start making food, and then before you know it, you're going to dinner parties.
- Harp: Are you calling me old?
- Maura: Hey. I go to dinner parties too.
- Harp: Yep. I really love dinner parties, setting the table with nice fancy plates—or even just normal—putting some candles, some nice flowers, making a nice dinner. I love dinner parties.
- Maura: Yeah. It's fun. But depending on how many people you invite, it can be a lot of a work if you're making food for a lot of people.
- Harp: I know. That tends to be my problem, because when I'm **throwing a dinner party**, I think, “Oh, I should invite this person, and this person, and this...” And then it becomes so big and too much work.

- Maura: One thing I like about having dinner parties, or really any kind of party, is that it forces me to clean up my apartment a lot.
- Harp: That's funny.
- Maura: Yeah. It's a good excuse to go through things, clean things that you don't normally pay attention to, and try to make your place look a little bit nicer.
- Harp: Yup, it's true. It is a good time to do a pretty deep cleaning.
- Maura: And at this time of year, you might also have a dinner party with friends too, because a lot of people take time off work, so maybe you don't have a **Christmas party** on Christmas or Boxing Day, but maybe sometime between Christmas and New Year's or in the New Year, you have some friends over and you have a dinner party that's a little bit holiday themed.
- Harp: Yes, definitely. And another type of party is the **housewarming party**.
- Maura: Right. That's a kind of party that you just had recently.
- Harp: Exactly. A **housewarming party** is when someone buys a new house or a new condo and they invite their friends over to warm the house.
- Maura: Right, that's the idea. To make it feel warm and cozy, like a real home.
- Harp: Yes.
- Maura: And yeah, it's a great way to show your friends your new place. You're excited about your new place, probably, so you want everyone to see it.
- Harp: Yeah. Like you said though, I just had my **housewarming party** and this was definitely the case of me just inviting a lot of extra people and then having to cook for a lot of people.
- Maura: Well, at your **housewarming party**, it was mostly just **finger food**, so I'm sure that **took some of the pressure off**, as opposed to cooking a full-on meal.
- Harp: You know, you would think that, but it was actually more work.
- Maura: Oh, really?
- Harp: I was shocked. It took us a lot more work. My best friend helped me and we were in the kitchen cooking for a long time.
- Maura: Well, I guess with **finger food**, you maybe have to put each piece together and make it look nice because some of the stuff that you had was actually really nice to look at, too.

- Harp: That was my best friend, not me.
- Maura: So yeah. These are just some of the popular kinds of parties that you can have.
- Harp: Yup. OK, let's move on to our next topic.
- Maura: Party planning. And, like I said, I don't have that much experience, so I'm gonna ask Harp about planning parties.
- Harp: I feel I've become a little bit of an expert lately.
- Maura: So what experience do you have with planning parties?
- Harp: OK. So in the last year or two, I've had to plan a lot of work parties, so I'm getting more and more experience with that. So when you're planning a party, you have to think about location (where you're gonna have the party), you have to think about the menu, who you're gonna invite, and what kind of **decorations** or **décor** you're gonna have.
- Maura: OK. So, how do you decide where you're going to have the party?
- Harp: Well, sometimes it's easy. **A housewarming party**, you have it at home. But for my work parties... Like I said, we're having our **holiday party** soon and that took a lot of time to decide. We had to call a lot of different restaurants and we have about 120 employees, so to find a restaurant big enough for that many people—and you wanted it close to work so people didn't have to drive or go far—it really took us a lot of time. And to have a menu that we wanted. It's the location and something fun, and exciting, and interesting.
- Maura: And again, at this time of year, you really have to plan in advance because so many places get booked, because, like we said, pretty much every place of employment is having **a holiday party**.
- Harp: You're completely right. We really wanted to do our work party on Thursday and so many restaurants that we called were booked for every Thursday in December by mid-November. Even early November, some restaurants were booked.
- Maura: Yeah. I bet. Some people plan ahead much better than I do.
- Harp: Yeah. This year we did a pretty good job. We booked it as early as we could, but it's tough to find a good place.
- Maura: And how did you decide on a menu?

- Harp: They usually present you a couple of different options and then you pick the best one. And oftentimes, you have to pick how many courses you're gonna have and it changes the price and everything, so...
- Maura: Mmhmm. So what kind of menu did you go with for your **Christmas party** this year?
- Harp: I'm very excited about it because I actually got to go for **the tasting**, so I've tried all the food and it was delicious. We're doing a four-course sit-down dinner. And we're starting with a carrot and ginger soup, then we're having a nice salad with tomato and bocconcini, and then everyone has the choice of a chicken option, steak, salmon, or vegetarian.
- Maura: Mmhmm. So, if you have a sit-down dinner, like you're having, especially with more than one course, that makes it a little bit more fancy, as opposed to having a buffet, which can feel more casual, or even more casual, which is, like, a cocktail style, where you're just eating and nibbling here and there.
- Harp: Yeah, definitely. It's gonna feel fancy because we're all going to be served the first course together, all the second and the third, and then the dessert course.
- Maura: Very nice. And **decorations**. Sometimes when people have parties at their homes, they don't put any **decorations** up but they might put out an especially nice table setting. But at this time of year, because it's over the holidays, there are usually some kinds of **decorations** up.
- Harp: Yeah. A lot of people have Christmas trees, or poinsettias, or something festive at their house.
- Maura: I like Christmas lights.
- Harp: Yes. I noticed on your street that a lot of houses have Christmas lights.
- Maura: But I also think they're fun to have inside.
- Harp: I agree with you.
- Maura: Yeah. It just makes it all cozy and warm feeling, especially because it's so cold outside.
- Harp: Yeah, that's true. But even... We had to consider that for our work **holiday party**, because the restaurant we chose, they don't have a lot of **decorations** for Christmas right now, so we had to decide if we wanted to add some. But really, we're doing it at a restaurant that has this view of all of Montreal and it's so beautiful, so we're gonna let the view be the **decoration**.

- Maura: That sounds nice. I love a good view.
- Harp: It's honestly the most stunning view of Montreal I've seen so far.
- Maura: So, let's look at the last part of this episode, which is expressions that have the word party in them.
- Harp: All right. Our first expression is **to throw a party**.
- Maura: I think this expression is so funny, because when you think about the word *to throw*, it really has nothing to do with the expression **to throw a party**, right? **To throw a party** just means to have a party, to plan a party, to give a party.
- Harp: Yeah. It means exactly that, but you're right. It is kind of funny expression, **to throw a party**.
- Maura: Right. But it sounds very casual, and fun, and spontaneous.
- Harp: Yeah. When usually they're a lot of work.
- Maura: Yup. So if you're having a party, you can just as easily say, "I'm **throwing a party**." And there's no real difference in the meaning at all.
- Harp: Nope, not at all. So you can tell your friends, "I'm **throwing a party** this weekend. You should come."
- Maura: Exactly. So, after someone has decided **to throw a party**, another person who wasn't invited may decide **to crash the party**.
- Harp: Yes. **To crash a party** means to go to a party that you're not invited to.
- Maura: Now, I have to say, I think this happens a lot more with teenagers and university students, because often those are big parties, so it's maybe a bit easier **to crash a party**.
- Harp: Yeah. I was thinking for a dinner party, for example. You would never **crash a dinner party**.
- Maura: Or if you did, it would be quite strange and awkward for everyone invited.
- Harp: Very awkward.
- Maura: But, right, if you **crash a party**, that means that you go to a party that you're not invited to.
- Harp: Yep. I've seen that happening at weddings a lot. When there's a big wedding and lots of guests, maybe four or five hundred guests, people **crash** them.

- Maura: That's true, especially after the dinner's been had. People can kind of sneak in, get some drinks, and dance.
- Harp: Yup.
- Maura: And we also have some expressions for people who come to a party and have so much fun and also spread the fun. They get other people to have more fun and they make the party more exciting.
- Harp: Yes. **The life of the party** is someone who, like Maura said, adds to the excitement and the happiness and the fun of a party.
- Maura: Right. It's like... Imagine if you were having a party and you wanted people to dance, so you put music on and you had space to dance, but then no one was really dancing. It's kind of disappointing. But **the life of the party**, that person would say, "I don't care. I'm gonna start dancing." And because they kind of **broke the ice** and they started dancing, everyone else would join in too.
- Harp: Another way to talk about someone who really has fun at parties is to say that someone **parties hard**.
- Maura: Right. **To party hard**. For me, this could also mean that someone stays up really, really late. Like, they're at the party till the very end, and maybe that they had a lot of alcohol.
- Harp: Yup. I agree with you.
- Maura: They really are extreme when they party. They don't just have a little bit of fun; they wanna go all out and have a crazy time.
- Harp: Yeah. They **party hard** so they party till late. They probably drink a lot.
- Maura: Yup. They could also make the party more exciting and bring up the energy, but sometimes they just make a big mess.
- Harp: Yeah. That's definitely true.
- Maura: And the last expression we're going to look at is somebody who doesn't make a party more fun.
- Harp: Yes. This is the person who kind of ruins the party a little bit.
- Maura: Right. They're invited, but they don't really have fun and they don't want to participate. Maybe you want to play a game. This person wouldn't want to play a game.

- Harp: Yes. **The party pooper**.
- Maura: Yes. It's such a funny expression. This person is called **a party pooper**.
- Harp: Yes. So **a party pooper** kind of ruins the mood a little bit in a party. They sometimes sit in the corner and sulk, and...
- Maura: Yeah. They're usually not very sociable, not smiling very much. They bring down the mood of the party.
- Harp: They're boring.
- Maura: And, you know, as we were preparing for this episode, I was singing Harp a little song about **party poopers**.
- Harp: This is a hilarious song and I really asked her to sing it for you all, so you could enjoy it as well.
- Maura: All right, here it goes. *At every party there's a pooper, that's why we invited you, **party pooper, party pooper***. And I think this started as a little bit of a joke for someone who came to a party and made it less fun.
- Harp: It's really funny. We'll post a video of someone singing this song, even though I think Maura just did a great job singing it.
- Maura: We've also been trying to find out where this song came from. So far, we haven't been able to figure it out, but I'm gonna keep looking and maybe by the time we upload this, episode I'll have found where this strange, strange song came from.
- Harp: Strange and hilarious song.
- Maura: Now, I'm about ready to party.
- Harp: I think we should go party.
- Maura: I think we have to go have the Culips party. We almost forgot about it.
- Harp: That's true. All right, so let's do a quick recap. We started with talking about types of parties.
- Maura: Right. And then Harp told us a little bit about planning parties.
- Harp: And then we talked about some expressions with the word *party* in them.
- Maura: Right. So, remember, as always, don't forget to help support us at Culips, if you enjoy our episodes, by becoming a member and you can do that easily by going to our website.

Harp: Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Maura: That's right. And wherever you are, whatever you're doing, we hope you're having a great time and we'll say one more time: Happy New Year and we hope you have a good one.

Harp: Happy New Year! Have a blast.

Maura: Bye.

Detailed Explanation

A holiday party

When listening to this episode, do you notice that Maura seems to call the parties held at this time of year **Christmas parties** and Harp calls them **holiday parties**? Are these different types of parties? Not really.

Because Canada and the United States, and many other countries too, are populated by people who practice a variety of religions, there has been a movement in recent years to often replace the word *Christmas* with *holiday*. Since many people don't celebrate Christmas, the use of the word *holiday* helps to include the festive time of year in general. For example, instead of wishing people merry Christmas, some people choose to say happy holidays.

But it is also important to note that although Christmas is a religious holiday, there are also many people who are not religious at all but still celebrate Christmas. Whether you celebrate Christmas or not, if you're living in North America, this is likely to be a time of year where you get a few extra days off work!

Extended family

A person's **extended family** includes relatives like aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, and grandparents. When someone's talking about their **extended family**, they might even be talking about relatives like second cousins or other more distant relatives. (A second cousin is a child of your cousin.)

If you want to specifically talk just about your mother, father, brothers, and sisters, you can call this group your immediate family. Usually when a person just says *family*, this is who they're talking about, but in some cases using the word *family* alone might not be clear enough, so **extended** or *immediate* can be added.

Here's an example:

Bette: I'll be spending time with my family over the holidays.

Sandra: Oh, that's nice. All of your **extended family**?

Bette: No, they live too far away. It'll be just my immediate family. They only live a couple of hours away.

A potluck

This is an expression that comes up from time to time at Culips, probably because Harp and Maura like to eat so much! **A potluck** is a kind of meal where all the people invited bring some food to share with everyone. This way everyone shares the work preparing the food and also gets to enjoy all the different types of food everyone else brings. This is exactly the reason why Harp and Maura mention **potlucks** in this episode.

In the 1500s, the word **potluck** originally referred to making food for an unexpected guest. If someone showed up unexpectedly and you wanted to feed them, you would have put whatever food you happened to have in the cooking pot and hoped that it turned out well. The word originates from “luck of the pot.” A few hundred years later, the meaning became known as it is today.

Here’s another example with **a potluck**:

Heath: I’ve wanted to throw a dinner party for a while now, but I just can’t find the time or energy to put one together!

Jose: Why don’t you do **a potluck**? Then it’ll be less work for you.

A Secret Santa

A Secret Santa is a gift-giving game that groups of people play at Christmas. **A Secret Santa** gift exchange might happen among a group of friends, colleagues, or family members.

In **a Secret Santa**, every person who is part of the exchange gets the name of someone else playing the game, who they then have to buy a Christmas present for. There is often a limit put on the amount of money you can spend on the gift. Everyone keeps the name of the person they are buying a gift for secret until the exchange happens. There are several variations on how people play this game, but this is one of the most common ways.

You can also call the person who is buying you a gift your **Secret Santa**.

Here’s an example:

Steven: We’re doing **a Secret Santa** at work.

Amanda: Oh, really. That’s fun! I wonder who your **Secret Santa** will be. I hope they have good taste in gifts!

A housewarming party

A housewarming party is a party someone has when they have recently moved into a new home. At your **housewarming party**, you can show all your friends what your new place looks like. As we say in this episode, the idea of **a housewarming party** is that the guests help create a warm, cozy home for the person to live.

The original purpose of **housewarming parties** was to actually warm the houses! In the past, when there was no central heating, guests would help to do this by bringing firewood to heat the house. This was also believed to help cleanse the house and get rid of any evil spirits.

Finger food

In Canada and the US, we usually eat food with a knife and fork, but **finger food** is food that can be eaten with your fingers, often in just one bite..

Finger food is often served at parties, and might include things like cheese sticks, pieces of fruit, spring rolls, or other miniature food items. Foods like hotdogs and sandwiches are considered **finger foods** too, because you don't need any utensils to eat them.

To take the pressure off

To feel pressure means to feel stress because of something you are supposed to do. Pressure can be physical or mental, but in this episode, the girls talk about the mental pressure that a person can feel. Feeling stressed or pressured is not a good feeling. So it feels pretty good when the **pressure is taken off**.

To take the pressure off means to remove or reduce the pressure that a person is feeling. For example, having someone else to help you with something can really **take the pressure off**.

In this episode, **to take the pressure off** is used when Harp and Maura talk about the finger food that Harp and her friend prepared for Harp's housewarming party. Harp says that she ended up inviting so many people to the party that it was a lot of work to prepare food for everyone. This kind of situation causes stress and puts pressure on the person having the party. Maura says that preparing finger food must have **taken some of the pressure off**. Maura thought that finger food would be easier to prepare than a full meal, so there would be less pressure.

Here are a couple more examples with **to take the pressure off**:

Christopher: Thank you so much. Your help with my schoolwork has really **taken the pressure off**.

Robert: No problem. I'm glad I could help.

Pat: I've been feeling so stressed at work lately. I've got too much work and not enough time to do it all!

Gavin: You should really try to find a way **to take some of the pressure off** yourself. Maybe one of your coworkers could help out?

There are lots of other expressions about pressure too. A few of them are: *to feel the pressure*, *to be under pressure*, *to put pressure on someone*, and *to relieve the pressure*.

Decorations and décor

The words **decoration** and **décor** are clearly related to each other, but their meanings are slightly different. Their pronunciations are different too. Listen again to the episode to hear the different intonations used for these words.

Decorations can be added to a space or item to make it more beautiful. For example, at Christmas time, many people put up **decorations** like wreaths or Christmas lights, and hang **decorations** on a Christmas tree.

Decorations are not necessary items, like chairs or tables. They are often not functional and are there only to make the space more attractive. **Decorations** are also often temporary, like **decorations** for Christmas, a birthday party, or some other special occasion.

A room's **décor** is the style and arrangement of the furniture and other elements in it, like wallpaper or paint. **Décor** was originally a French word, so there is an accent on the e to show how it is pronounced: *day-cor*. But since we don't usually use accents in English, you might also see it without one: **décor**, especially in American English.

Even though the first three letters of the words **decorations** and **décor** are *d-e-c*, the first syllable of **decorations** sounds like *deck*, while the first syllable of **décor** sounds like *day*. This difference in pronunciation is because of **décor's** French origins.

A tasting

In this episode, Harp says that she got to go to **a tasting** when helping to plan a company party. **A tasting** is when you taste food in order to see if you would like to have this food at a special event.

Before Harp's company party, she went to taste the food to decide whether it would be good to have at the party. **Tastings** like this are usually not free, so there may be some cost for the people who taste the food. Any large events with food can involve **a tasting**, beforehand, especially weddings.

To throw a party

To throw a party means to have a party. There is no difference at all in the meaning of these two expressions, and they can be used interchangeably. **To throw party** is related to older English expressions, but the origin of this funny expression is not clear.

Here's one more example with **to throw a party**:

Joanne: Are you coming to **the party I'm throwing** this weekend?

Jennifer: What? I didn't even know you were having a party! But, yeah, I'll be there!

To crash a party

To crash a party means to go to a party that you were not invited to. When a person goes to a party that they were not invited to, they might ruin the party. This is just like when something (like a car) crashes or is crashed; it may be ruined. However, we can still use this phrase whether or not the party is ruined, as long as the person who goes to the party was not invited. For example, a person could **crash a large party** without anyone ever even knowing. And if that person turned out to be the life of the party, the **party crasher** could even end up making a party better for everyone!

As Maura and Harp say in this episode, it is not very common **to crash small parties**. This would be very obvious and inappropriate, and everyone would know. It is easier **to crash larger parties**, and often these parties are not ruined by **party crashers**. The most common **party crashers** are teenagers because they go to large parties more often.

In 2005, the movie *Wedding Crashers* was released. This movie is about some friends who go to weddings they are not invited to. The movie stars Owen Wilson and Vince Vaughn as **wedding crashers** (the guys who **crash weddings**).

Here's another example with **to crash a party**:

Dean: I technically wasn't invited to Derek's party tonight, so I don't know whether I should go.

Olivia: Just **crash** it. He won't even notice. So many people are going.

The life of the party

When a person is described as **the life of the party**, this means they are very sociable, friendly, and fun. This kind of person brings life and energy to a party. Someone who's **the life of the party** often speaks loudly, tells jokes, and dances. A person could be **the life of the party** just at one specific party, or they could generally bring energy to any party they attend.

Here's one more example with **the life of the party**:

Melinda: Whoa! Look at Marc. He's really **the life of the party** tonight.

Daniel: Yeah! Who knew he could dance like that? He's got some good moves.

To break the ice

To break the ice means to get a conversation started or to do something else to make a social situation less awkward and more comfortable for people.

For example, many teachers use games (called **icebreakers**) on the first day of class **to break the ice** and encourage conversation between the students and help them to get to know each other.

In this expression, *ice* represents the "cold" feeling of a socially awkward situation when people don't know each other and feel shy. When someone **breaks the ice**, the situation feels more comfortable

In this episode, the expression **to break the ice** is used to talk about dancing at a party. In the example given, no one is dancing so someone **breaks the ice** when they start dancing and then gets everyone else to dance too. Starting to dance can feel socially awkward when no one else is doing it, but after everyone gets dancing it can be really fun!

Here are a couple more examples with **to break the ice**:

Harriet: I thought that meeting was going to be so dull and serious yesterday, but it was actually pretty fun.

Tetsuya: I know. Those jokes that Aaron told at the beginning really **broke the ice**. It seemed like everyone felt really comfortable with each other after that.

Marcel: No one in the audience was willing to volunteer when the magician asked for someone to go up on stage, so I **broke the ice** and went up.

Paulo: Yeah, that was brave of you. It wouldn't have been any fun if no one had volunteered, but after you did it the first time, people weren't so scared!

To party hard

To party hard means to really get involved in a party and its activities. People who **party hard** party till the point of physical exhaustion. **Partying hard** includes doing things like staying up very late or staying right until the end of the party, dancing a lot, and drinking too much alcohol. These are just some of the things that would make a **hard partier** tired!

Some people who like **to party hard** seem to have an endless amount of energy and they never seem to get tired from all this activity. A person can **party hard** all the time or just at certain parties.

Here's another example with **to party hard**:

Adam: Wow. Does your friend always **party this hard**?

Stan: No, not always. I think he's just letting off some steam after a difficult week at work.

A party pooper

A party pooper is a person who is not fun at a party. This could be only at a specific party or a person might be **a party pooper** all the time. This expression is often used for a specific moment at a party. For example, if a guy asks his girlfriend to dance with him and she says no, he could call her **a party pooper**. This is often done to encourage the person to get into the party more. After her boyfriend calls her **a party pooper** because she didn't want to dance, the girl might respond by saying, "All right, fine. I'll dance with you."

This expression can be used outside of a party situation too. You could call someone **a party pooper** any time they're ruining something that's fun, whether or not it's an actually party.

Here are a couple more examples with **a party pooper**:

June: Alicia is such **a party pooper**. She just never seems happy.

Ariane: Yeah, maybe she's depressed.

Pascal: Do you want to go talk to those people over there?

Barb: No. I don't know them.

Pascal: Don't be such **a party pooper**. They look friendly.

In this episode, Maura sings a little song about **a party pooper**. The exact origin of this song is not clear. It began as a parody of Frank Sinatra's song *Pretty Baby*. It was further popularized when characters sang it in the 1995 movie *Father of the Bride II*.

Quiz

1. **Why is it usually better to say *holiday party* instead of *Christmas party*?**
 - a) because it's easier to pronounce
 - b) because it can be used at any time of year
 - c) because not everyone celebrates Christmas
 - d) because the parties are at work

2. **Which of the following people would be included in your extended family, but are not part of your immediate family?**
 - a) your brothers
 - b) your sisters
 - c) your parents
 - d) your cousins

3. **If you pull the name *Pamela* at the start of a Secret Santa, what does this mean?**
 - a) You have to buy a gift for Pamela.
 - b) Pamela has to buy a gift for you.
 - c) You and Pamela have to buy a gift for your boss.
 - d) You and Pamela don't have to buy gifts for anyone.

4. **Where does the term *housewarming party* come from?**
 - a) Party guests used to help warm a house by bringing wood to build a fire.
 - b) Party guests used to cook using a stove, which heated the room.
 - c) When many guests are in a room, it gets warm.
 - d) These kinds of parties used to be held only in the summer.

5. **Which of the following is not an example of finger food?**
 - a) a sandwich
 - b) a miniature sausage
 - c) a steak
 - d) fruit

6. Which of the following has a first syllable pronounced *deck*?

- a) decorations
- b) décor
- c) both a and b
- d) neither a nor b

7. Clay's going _____ on Friday night. It should be fun.

Please fill in the blank with the expression that means to have a party.

- a) to through a party
- b) to throw a party
- c) to pull a party
- d) to cut a party

8. Someone who's the life of the party would probably NEVER do which of the following at a party?

- a) fall asleep
- b) dance
- c) sing
- d) meet new people

9. What kind of people do you most often need to break the ice with?

- a) old friends
- b) family members
- c) colleagues
- d) strangers

Answers:

1.c 2.d 3.a 4.a 5.c 6.a 7.b 8.a 9.d